

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: PFOR, MILI, SZ

SUBJECT: ALLEGED OVERFLIGHT PROPOSAL

REF: BERN 565

1. TAGESANZEIGER (ZURICH) FEBRUARY 8 CARRIED FOLLOWING
STORY:

"ARE THERE CURRENTLY AMERICAN EFFORTS UNDERWAY TO
SECURE MILITARY OVERFLIGHT RIGHTS IN SWITZERLAND IN THE
CASE OF ANOTHER WAR IN THE NEAR EAST? THE RECENTLY
NOMINATED NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN BERN CHARACTERIZES
THIS QUESTION AS "A PROBLEM OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE" BETWEEN
THE U.S. AND SWITZERLAND. AMERICAN AND SWISS OFFICIAL
SOURCES ARE MAKING DENIALS. HOWEVER, THE AIR OFFICE IN
BERN HAS CONFIRMED, IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, THAT DURING
THE PAST YOM KIPPUR WAR, SWISS OFFICIALS IN FRANKFURT
HAD INSPECTED THE CONTENTS OF AMERICAN MILITARY AIRCRAFT
BEFORE THEY WERE ALLOWED TO OVERFLY SWITZERLAND.
PETER DOMINIK, WHO IN THE SPRING WILL REPLACE THE CURRENT
U.S. AMBASSADOR IN SWITZERLAND, SHELBY CULLOM DAVIS, STATED
IN AN INTERVIEW IN HIS HOME IN WASHINGTON THAT ONE OF THE
BIGGER PROBLEMS WAS "THE QUESTION OF OVERFLIGHT RIGHTS IN
CASE SOMETHING HAPPENS IN THE NEAR EAST." ACCORDING TO
DOMINICK, IT IS A MATTER FIRST AND FOREMOST OF THE TRANSPORT
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OF WAR MATERIAL (ARMS AND AMMUNITION) FROM GERMANY OR ENGLAND

OR "SOMEWHERE ELSE." HE FURTHER STATED THAT THERE HAD ALREADY BEEN CONTACTS AT A "SUBORDINATE LEVEL" BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE U.S. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AND THE SWISS MILITARY. HE THOUGHT THAT A FEDERAL PRESIDENT HAS ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THESE CONTACTS, BUT WAS UNABLE TO FURNISH ANY DETAILS CONCERNING WHEN AND IN WHAT FORM SUCH DISCUSSIONS HAD TAKEN PLACE. DOMINICK FAILED TO BE REELECTED AS SENATOR OF COLORADO LAST AUTUMN AND WAS THEN NAMED AS AMBASSADOR TO BERN. AT THE PRESENT TIME, AS HE SAYS, HE IS BEING PREPARED FOR HIS NEW POST "BY MEANS OF BRIEFINGS" IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND ELSEWHERE.

HE SAID IN THE INTERVIEW THAT HE HAS A HIGH REGARD FOR SWITZERLAND, "THIS NEUTRAL COUNTRY ON OUR SIDE." DOMINICK'S VERSION WAS PROMPTLY DENIED ON THURSDAY IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT AS WELL AS IN THE PENTAGON.

THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL FOR SWITZERLAND IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT, BRUCE FLATIN, SAID "THERE IS NOTHING TO THE STORY. SHOULD IT EVER COME TO SUCH DISCUSSIONS, WE WOULD CERTAINLY KNOWN ABOUT THEM. NOBODY WOULD TURN TO THE SWISS GOVERNMENT WITHOUT FIRST CHECKING WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT." ACCORDING TO FLATIN, THE AMERICANS WOULD HARDLY GET THE IDEA OF APPROACHING BERN WITH SUCH REQUESTS. "PEOPLE WHO KNOW SWITZERLAND HERE, ALSO KNOW SWISS POLITICAL DOCTRINE," HE SAID. HE ALSO STATED THAT DOMINICK HAD NOT YET BEEN BRIEFED AND EXPRESSED THE ASSUMPTION THAT IT WAS ALL A MISUNDERSTANDING. THE PENTAGON ALSO DECLARED THAT IT KNEW NOTHING OF THE WHOLE MATTER.

NEITHER IN BERN'S POLITICAL DEPARTMENT NOR IN THE FEDERAL AIR OFFICE IS ANYTHING KNOWN ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE U.S. ON OVERFLIGHTS OF SWITZERLAND IN CASE OF A NEW NEAR EAST CONFLICT. BERN ALSO HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY U.S. PROBINGS. THE OVERFLIGHT OF SWITZERLAND BY AIRCRAFT OF FOREIGN AIR FORCES IS GENERALLY REGULATED AS FOLLOWS: ON THE CONDITION THAT NO WAR MATERIEL AND NO ARMED PERSONNEL ARE CARRIED, THE AIR OFFICE, IN CONFORMITY WITH SWISS NEUTRAL POLICY, MAY GRANT APPROVAL FOR SUCH FLIGHTS.

ACCORDING TO SWISS PRACTICE, AMERICAN MILITARY AIRCRAFT
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RECEIVED "BLANKET" (GRUPPENWEISE) APPROVAL TO OVERFLY SWITZERLAND IF NO WAR MATERIEL AND NO ARMED PERSONS ARE ABOARD.

IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT DURING THE LAST NEAR EAST WAR THE NUMBER OF THESE OVERFLIGHTS GREATLY INCREASED WHICH RESULTED IN AN INTERVENTION BY THE SWISS AUTHORITIES. THE AMERICANS DECLARED THAT THEY WERE READY AFTER THIS INITIATIVE OF THE

SWISS AUTHORITIES, TO ALLOW SWISS OFFICIALS IN FRANKFURT TO VIEW THE CONTENTS OF THE FREIGHT BEFORE THE AIRCRAFT BEGAN THEIR FLIGHTS.

THE FEDERAL AIR OFFICE HAS ONLY CONFIRMED THAT SWISS OFFICIALS WERE IN FRANKFURT IN ORDER TO CHECK THE "PRACTICE OF AUTHORIZING OVERFLIGHTS." TO THE QUESTION WHETHER THE NUMBER OF U.S. MILITARY FLIGHTS OVER SWITZERLAND REALLY INCREASED SHARPLY DURING THE WAR, AIR OFFICE DIRECTOR GULDIMANN SAID THAT HE DID NOT REMEMBER."

2. OTHER PAPERS HAVE NOT PICKED UP STORY, AND WE ASSUME THAT DENIALS IN WASHINGTON AND BERN MAY NOW HAVE LAID IT TO REST.
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